



Wisconsin Merchants Federation

1 East Main Street, Suite 305
Madison, Wisconsin 53703
Telephone 608/257-3541
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OFFICERS

**Chairman of
The Board**
Alan Rudnick
Rudnick Jewelers
Sheboygan

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President/CEO
Chris C. Tackett

**Sr. Vice President
& General Counsel**
Douglas Q. Johnson

V.P./Operations
Mary C. Kaja

July 14, 2004 *"The Voice of Wisconsin Retailing"*

Dear Jonathan S. Adelstein:

The Wisconsin Merchants Federation represents more than 6,000 retailers doing business statewide ranging from national retailers to main street hardware stores. Some of our members sell pre-paid calling cards. Some do not. Either way WMF agrees with AT&T's position on this matter: interstate access charges apply to pre-paid calling card calls, not in-state fees.

Only if interstate charges are protected can AT&T and other long-distance companies continue to offer small businesses and consumers low rates for pre-paid calling cards, a nice respite from inflationary prices in other markets. The FCC should reject the Bells' proposal for adding in-state fees to pre-paid calling cards. The FCC should stay out of this competition fight and let the market decide.

Our members report that many of their customers have found the most effective way to control monthly telephone expenses is through pre-paid calling cards. Consumers can shop for the best price and monitor the minutes remaining on their card. It's a good way to ensure that telephone costs come in on budget month after month.

With so many other uncertainties in the business world right now, customers report that they like being able to count on the consistent expense control they enjoy with pre-paid calling cards. WMF is more than concerned about the Bell Companies wanting to add hidden charges to what customers pay for pre-paid calling cards. The proposal they've made will add charges that are 20 times higher than the charges now included in the pre-paid card's prices.

The Bells are arguing that pre-paid card calls should be considered in-state calls and taxed the same way. In fact, the calls made with these cards are long-distance calls. They simply call a toll-free number, listen to a message, and then dial the call. Clearly, pre-paid card calls should be assessed only interstate access charges, not the higher in-state access charges.

The Bell Companies make billions of dollars a year. The in-state fees they're seeking bear no resemblance to the Bells' actual costs. They're exorbitant and unnecessary. The Bells are completely compensated by long-distance access fees already in place for calling card calls. Again, we ask you to stay out of this competition fight and let the market decide.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Christopher Tackett
President & CEO

Douglas Johnson
Sr. VP & General Counsel

July 7, 2004

Chairman Michael Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

RE: WC Docket No. 03-133

Dear Chairman Powell,

I am writing to ask that the FCC not impose new hidden charges and fees on prepaid calling card services.

Minorities, low-income families, senior citizens, immigrants, college students and military families rely upon calling card services for a variety of needs. Many of these consumers do not have a credit history, bank accounts, or the means to pay a large deposit for local telephone service. For these consumers, a prepaid card may be the only option they have to stay connected - to make phone calls to look for a job, for affordable housing, make a doctor's appointment, or stay in touch with family and friends. These cards offer convenience and predictable cost, as there are no hidden fees or charges. In economically disadvantaged areas, consumers literally risk being disconnected if the prices of these cards increase. Prepaid calling cards are indispensable to consumer groups because they are an affordable alternative to regular and wireless telephone services.

But such price hikes are precisely what the FCC will do if it inflicts new "in-state" access charges and other fees on pre-paid cards. The fees would funnel directly to large local telephone companies while the burden would fall squarely upon those consumers that can least afford to bear it.

Adding access charges to be paid to local telephone companies will substantially increase the per minute charges on pre-paid calls, jeopardizing the benefits Latino and other communities gain from these services. Please stop any effort to raise rates on American consumers and decide that these services are not subject to the exorbitant new access charges and other fees.

Sincerely,

Sandra Lopez, TX.

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
Commissioner Kevin Martin
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein
Senator
Senator
Congressperson

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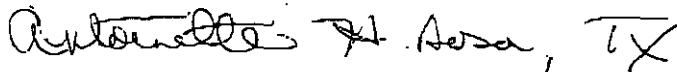
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With gas and milk prices already holding fixed and low income consumers hostage, we should not be faced with rising telephone service costs as well. In particular, many low-income households who are on fixed incomes depend entirely upon prepaid service because they cannot meet the credit rating or hefty deposit requirements that local phone companies insist upon before getting a phone. With prepaid cards, consumers can make calls from payphones or the telephones of family members and neighbors. We can use these cards to stay "connected" as we look for jobs, hunt for houses, or schedule many of the other daily appointments that we all have.

I simply find it unimaginable that the FCC would impose new charges and fees on these cards. Some of the nation's largest telephone companies would be the largest beneficiaries of such charges. **The FCC should stand up for consumer interests over corporate gain by keeping affordable prepaid calling cards a priority.**

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 Antonio H. Arce, TX

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Vivian A. Vallego
TEXAS

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Adrian Martiny Texas

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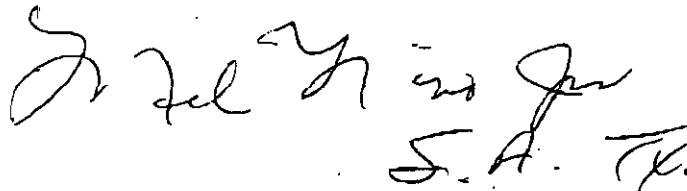
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Armin Hefel - Washington DC

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
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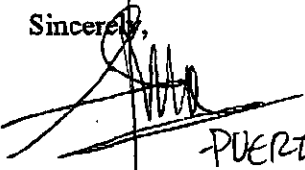
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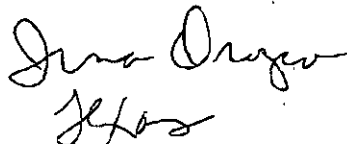
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Sincerely,

Francis Calbraña Lopez

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
Commissioner Kevin Martin
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein
Senator
Senator
Congressperson

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Sincerely,

Norma Pastana, Puerto Rico

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Sincerely,

Maria B. Melancon

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
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Commissioner Kevin Martin
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein
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Rosa E. Urrutia Texas

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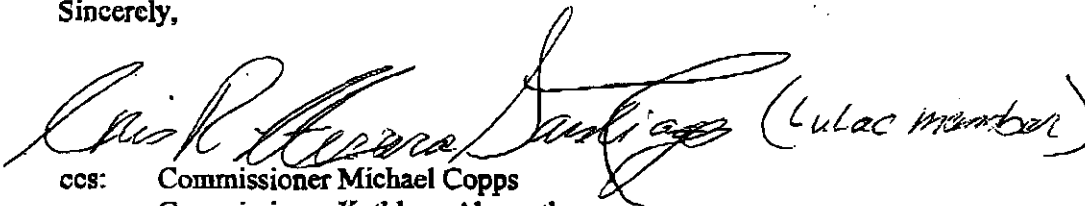
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 (Lulac member)

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The FCC should not impose new access charges and fees upon prepaid calling cards. If you move to increase the cost of these cards, you will simply drive up the cost for minority or disadvantaged individuals to stay in touch in their communities.

The Latino community is particularly sensitive to any price increase for pre-paid calling cards; approximately 43% of Latino households use them. Indeed, half of the households with incomes below \$20,000 have used prepaid cards. Pre-paid calling cards are so prevalent in part because they save consumers money.

With gas and milk prices already holding fixed and low income consumers hostage, we should not be faced with rising telephone service costs as well. In particular, many low-income households who are on fixed incomes depend entirely upon prepaid service because they cannot meet the credit rating or hefty deposit requirements that local phone companies insist upon before getting a phone. With prepaid cards, consumers can make calls from payphones or the telephones of family members and neighbors. We can use these cards to stay "connected" as we look for jobs, hunt for houses, or schedule many of the other daily appointments that we all have.

I simply find it unimaginable that the FCC would impose new charges and fees on these cards. Some of the nation's largest telephone companies would be the largest beneficiaries of such charges. **The FCC should stand up for consumer interests over corporate gain by keeping affordable prepaid calling cards a priority.**

Sincerely,


ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
Commissioner Kevin Martin
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein
Senator
Senator
Congressperson

P.R. 00927

787-758-1091

July 7, 2004

Chairman Michael Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

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RE: WC Docket No. 03-133

Dear Chairman Powell,

I am writing to ask that the FCC not impose new hidden charges and fees on prepaid calling card services.

Minorities, low-income families, senior citizens, immigrants, college students and military families rely upon calling card services for a variety of needs. Many of these consumers do not have a credit history, bank accounts, or the means to pay a large deposit for local telephone service. For these consumers, a prepaid card may be the only option they have to stay connected – to make phone calls to look for a job, for affordable housing, make a doctor's appointment, or stay in touch with family and friends. These cards offer convenience and predictable cost, as there are no hidden fees or charges. In economically disadvantaged areas, consumers literally risk being disconnected if the prices of these cards increase. Prepaid calling cards are indispensable to consumer groups because they are an affordable alternative to regular and wireless telephone services.

But such price hikes are precisely what the FCC will do if it inflicts new "in-state" access charges and other fees on pre-paid cards. The fees would funnel directly to large local telephone companies while the burden would fall squarely upon those consumers that can least afford to bear it.

Adding access charges to be paid to local telephone companies will substantially increase the per minute charges on pre-paid calls, jeopardizing the benefits Latino and other communities gain from these services. Please stop any effort to raise rates on American consumers and decide that these services are not subject to the exorbitant new access charges and other fees.

Sincerely,

Pat Centeno
Texas

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
Commissioner Kevin Martin
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein
Senator
Senator
Congressperson



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Lima Medina TX

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
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Commissioner Kevin Martin
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein
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Reto Ornela San Antonio TX

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Sincerely,

Joan Sanzley TEXAS

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
Commissioner Kevin Martin
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein
Senator
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Georg R. Brille . TEXAS.

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